(d) if so, what were the main points discussed therein;

(e) to what extent Government are considering to review the food procurement policy; and

(f) by when it is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, a Conference on "Towards Hunger Free India" was held between 24—26th April, 2001 in New Delhi. It was organized jointly by the Planning Commission, World Food Programme and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.

(d) The discussion mainly revolved around the question of ensuring food security to all in India. The different technical sessions, accordingly, deliberated upon the themes of: (i) food availability and vulnerability to national disasters; (ii) food absorption and utilization and (iii) sustainable livelihood and economic access to food.

(e) The Government of India (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution) constituted a High Level Committee for formulating a Long-term Grain Policy for the country in November 17, 2000. One of the terms of reference of the Committee refers to examining the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and price support operations.

(f) The High Level Committee, mentioned above is expected to give its report by September 30, 2001.

Inquiries into the fire incidents in ammunition depots

*78. SHRI R. P. GOENKA:
SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any detailed inquiries have been instituted into the cases of the recent successive fire at ammunition dumps at Bharatpur, Pathankot,

Birdhwal and Delhi Ordnance Depot destroying huge stores of artillery and tank shells etc. worth several crores;

(b) if so, the details of the findings thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that about 60 per cent of the army's ammunition is stored in the open under tarpaulin sheets in glaring violation of storage norms; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to protect the materials storage depots and to streamline the inventory management systems?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) to (d) Details of the findings of the Courts of Enquiry into the fire incidents in Ammunition Depots.

Sl. No.	Name of Units	Date of Occurrence	Approximate Losses Suffered (in Rs.)
(a)	Ammunition Depot, Bharatpur	28 April, 2000	393 crores
(b)	2 Ammunition Sub Depot, (18 FAD), Mamoon, (Pathankot)	29 April, 2001	27.69 crores
(c)	2 Ammunition Sub Depot (24 FAD), Birdhwal (Ganganagar)	24 May, 2001	378 crores (approx.)
(d)	Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi	3 June, 2001	2.68 crores (approx.)

Courts of Inquiry, other than those of 2 Ammunition Sub Depot (24 Field Ammunition Depot), Birdhwal (Ganganagar) and ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi, have been completed. The main findings / recomendations and the action taken thereon are listed as under:—

(i) *Ammunition Depot, Bharatpur* (28 April, 2000): The likely cause was due to short circuit / sparking on pole No. 4 near Guard Post No. 11. It has, however, not been possible to confirm this through specific, direct evidence. Two civilians died and seven civilians were injured. Administrative action, however, has been initiated against the defaulters. The Court of Inquiry has, *inter-alia*, made the following recommendations:—

(1) Manpower and Equipment deficiency be made up.

(2) Strict control be maintained over cooking and heating at the Guard Post.

(3) Communications capability needs to be stepped up.

(4) Employment of Casual Labour for clearance of undergrowth be permitted.

(5) Construction of additional ammunition sheds be taken up.

Deficiency in manpower and equipment have been made up partially. Construction of 21 Explosive Store Houses for storage of ammunition is in progress. Works on perimeter fencing, and enhancement of electric and water supply have been sanctioned Additional communication equipment has been provided.

(ii) *2 Ammunition Sub Depot (18 FAD), Mamoon (Pathankot),* (29.4.2001): One person was injured in this incident. The Court of Inquiry made the following main recommendations:—

(1) Deficiencies in fire fighting equipment be made up.

(2) Shortage of security staff be made up.

(3) Plant and Machinery for clearance of grass be procured.

(4) Holding of unit ammunition in depots to be avoided.

(5) Storage and handling of ammunition to be as per regulations.

(6) Ammunition Regulations need updating.

(7) Gazette notification under Indian Works of Defence Act, 1903, to be issued.

The Court of Inquiry has held three Officers, one JCO and three ORs responsible. The Court of Inquiry has been finalized only recently. However, departmental directions on security, fire fighting and management of ammunition have been reiterated.

(iii) *2 Ammunition Sub Depot (24 FAD), Birdhwal (Ganganagar)* 24.5.2001: The cause of fire will only be ascertained after completion of Court of Inquiry, which is under progress.

(iv) Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi: The report of the Court of Inquiry is awaited.

Due to paucity of funds, the ammunition storage facilities uptil now were not adequate to provide total, covered and modern storage accommodation for ammunition held with various ammunition depots. Because of this some quantity of ammunition has perforce had to be placed on open plinths covered by tarpaulins. The Government has, however, in the years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 allotted and planned that by the year 2003-2004, all ammunition would be shifted into covered accommodation. Additional funds will be made available for this, if any additional demand is raised for this purpose.

The following steps have been taken to obviate the chance of such incidents:—

(a) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instruction.

(b) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

(c) Shortages in fire fighting equipment are being made up and defective equipment repaired.

(d) Unserviceable ammunition is being disposed off on priority.

(e) Allotment of additional funds for creation of more storage accommodation, for shifting ammunition presently stored on open plinths under canvas to Explosive Stores Houses.

Streamlining Inventory Management: At present only limited automation has been achieved. Depots are presently functioning on stand alone basis. Complete automation of inventory is being carried out as part of the Computerized Inventory Control Project (CICP), in the following three phases:—

(i) *Phase*-I: Automate inventory management functions of Central Ordnance Depot, Delhi Cantonment Army Headquarters and Ministry of Defence as a Pilot Project. This task is likely to be completed by December, 2001.

(ii) *Phase*-II: All the remaining Central Ordnance Depot, selected Regional Ordnance Depots and a Divisional Ordnance Unit by September, 2003.

(iii) *Phase*-III: All the remaining Regional Ordnance Depots / Divisional Ordnance Units / Brigade Ordnance Units / Ordnance Maintenance Companies / Ordnance Maintenance Platoons/Technical Store Section by March, 2005.

Social security to workers

*79. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission in the "Approach Paper" for the Ninth Five Year Plan had stated that social security would be provided to workers both in the organised and unorganised sectors and that an Integrated Comprehensive Scheme of Social Security would be evolved by having a single legislation covering all the existing social security schemes; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to achieve the above targets?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATTYA): (a) and (b) Pursuant to the recommendations as contained in the Approach Paper of the Ninth Five Year Plan regarding an integrated comprehensive scheme on social security, a Task Force on Social Security under the Chairmanship of Sh. S.K. Wadhawan was constituted to examine the matter. The Task Force submitted their report in May, 2000.

As the acceptance of recommendations of the Task Force involved heavy financial implication, the entire report of the Task Force has been referred to the Second National Commission on Labour for an in-depth study. Further action can be taken only after the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour become available to the Government.

Sale of rice in non-rice procuring States

*80. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: